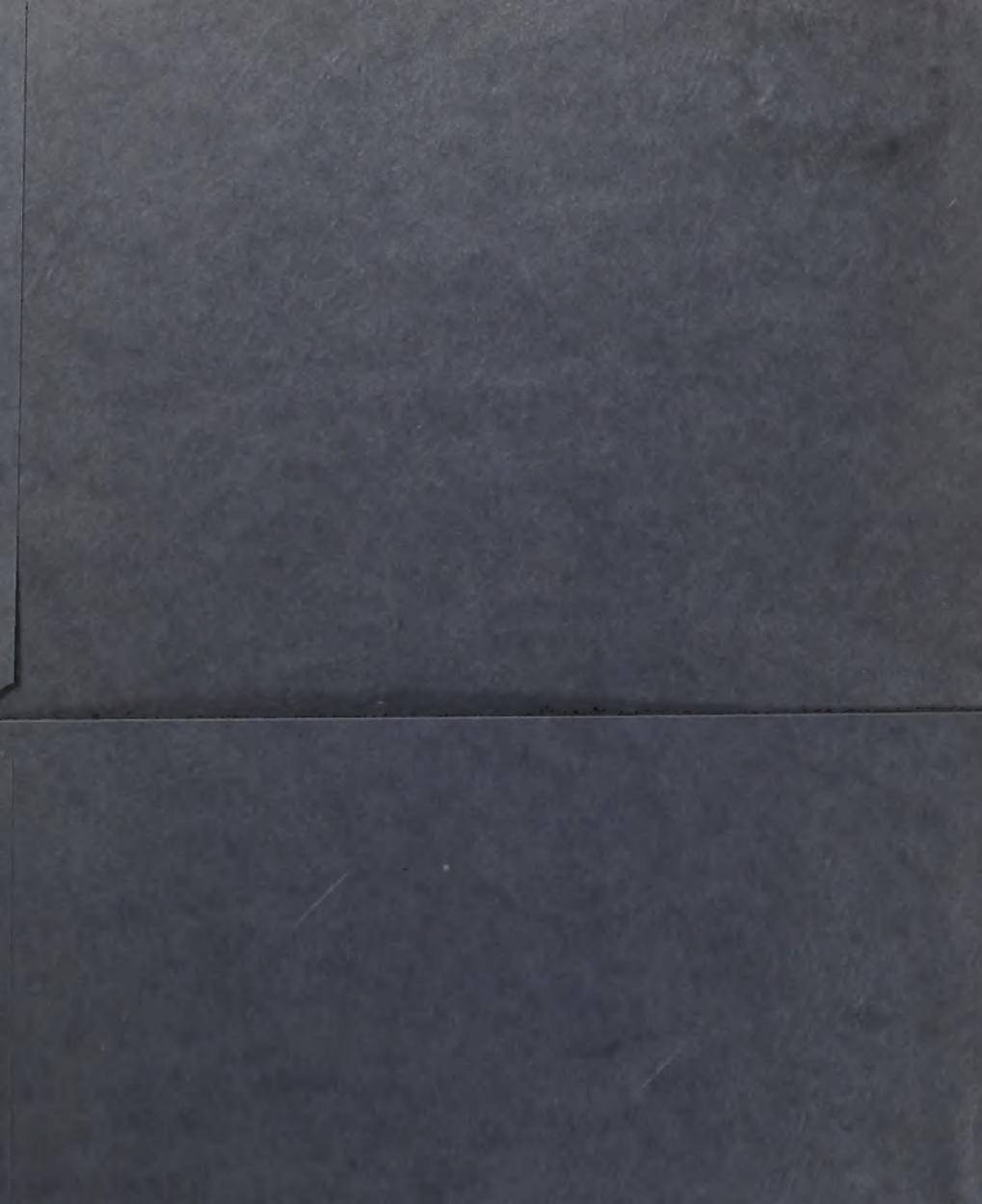


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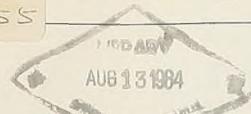
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# French River

## Candidate Provincial Waterway Park Management Plan



Ministry of  
Natural  
Resources  
Ontario



Parks  
Canada  
Parcs  
Canada

### WHY A FRENCH RIVER PROVINCIAL PARK?

Both the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario have identified the French River as an outstanding heritage and recreational waterway which should have special status and recognition. This has led to proposals for establishing a provincial waterway park on the French River and, more recently, for designating the French as a Canadian Heritage River.

#### What area is involved?

The French River from Lake Nipissing to Georgian Bay is being considered for provincial park designation. Included are Crown owned shorelines 200 m back from the water, and the whole complex of channels and islands at the French River mouth. The map on the centre pages of this paper shows the proposed park area.

#### What would be the benefits of park designation?

Designating the French River as a provincial waterway park would increase public awareness and recognition of the river's significance as a heritage resource and recreational area. Designation would also help ensure protection of the river's outstanding natural and scenic character. The local economy would benefit from designation through protection of the tourist industry's resource base, and increased awareness of the French River among the travelling public.

#### Would park designation affect private property?

Private property would not be included in the park. The Dokis and French River Indian reserves would also remain outside. There would be no expropriation of any kind. There would also be no significant limitations on present uses of private property.

#### How would park designation affect the river as it is today?

Park management would generally be consistent with provincial policies for waterway parks. The main emphasis



would be on protecting the river's heritage and recreational resources, and on developing and managing waterway recreation opportunities to complement the accommodation and facilities which tourist operators and cottagers provide. The French River would remain much as it is today.

- a proposed basic policy direction for a French River provincial park,
- the boundary and zoning proposed for the park,
- proposed policies for land use, facility development, and resource and recreation management in the park.

#### What would Canadian Heritage River designation mean?

The French River would be recognized as part of a cooperative system of heritage rivers of outstanding value to Canadians. This would further promote public awareness of the river's heritage and recreational values, not just in Ontario but all across Canada. The Ontario Government would still own and manage all public lands and resources on the river.

#### What is in this paper?

This paper includes:

- a brief description of the French River, its resources, and its significance,
- a summary of current resource management issues,
- information on land use planning and the outlook for development in the area,

#### Does this mean a final decision has been made?

No! The purpose of this paper is to obtain public reaction to a Ministry of Natural Resources proposal for establishing and managing a French River provincial waterway park. The Minister will make a final decision whether there should be a park, and, if so, what its boundaries should be, only after hearing from you.

#### How can I take part?

Public support will be essential for any decision to establish a French River provincial park. We want to hear from you! The How You Can Take Part section at the end of the paper tells you how you can get further information from us, and how you can participate in the planning process. Once you have looked through this paper, please let us know what you think!

Proposed

## FRENCH RIVER MANAGEMENT PLAN - A JOINT CANADA-ONTARIO PROJECT

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources

The Ministry of Natural Resources has the primary responsibility for managing Ontario's natural resources. This includes managing Crown lands and waters, Crown forests and minerals, and all fish and wildlife. Managing recreation on Crown lands and waters, and developing and managing provincial parks, are also Ministry responsibilities. Therefore, the Ministry will decide whether to establish a French River provincial park, and will be responsible for managing the park if established.

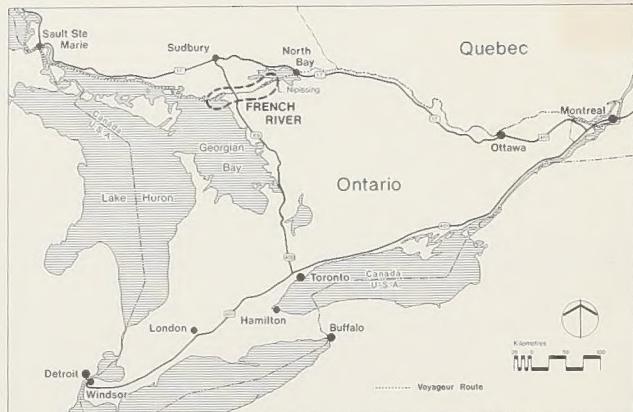
Parks Canada, Canada Department  
of the Environment

In a new initiative, a Canadian Heritage Rivers Board representing the federal, provincial, and territorial governments has been established. This Board will recommend outstanding heritage waterways for joint federal-provincial designation as Canadian Heritage Rivers, with the provinces retaining all their present management responsibilities. Parks Canada, which is responsible for protecting and managing nationally significant heritage resources through its system of national and historic parks and sites, represents the Government of Canada on the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board. Parks Canada is also helping to fund planning and management studies leading to the designation of Canadian Heritage Rivers.

### The French River - a Pioneer Joint Project

The French River is the first waterway in Ontario and one of the first in Canada to be considered for designation as a Canadian Heritage River. As well, this management plan is the first to be prepared under the Canadian Heritage Rivers program. The management plan has two purposes. It will serve the Ministry of Natural Resources as a resource management plan for the French River, and as a provincial park management plan if a park is established. It will also meet Canadian Heritage Rivers program requirements that a provincial management plan be submitted to the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board before the French River can formally be designated as a Canadian Heritage River.

The French River Management Plan is being prepared by a French River Committee consisting mainly of Ministry of Natural Resources staff but with Ministry of Tourism and Recreation and Parks Canada representation also. A French River Advisory Group, including volunteer representatives of local interests, has also been established and is working closely with Ministry staff on the project. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Parks Canada are sharing the cost of the Management Plan.



# The French River

Located 70 km south of Sudbury and 330 km north of Toronto, the French River drains from Lake Nipissing into Georgian Bay. It is only 110 km in length, hardly a long river by Canadian standards. Yet its location, cutting across the narrowest neck of the Canadian Shield between the Ottawa River and the upper Great Lakes, made it one

of Canada's great rivers, a critically important transportation artery until the coming of steamships and railways. Protected by the ruggedness and remoteness of the country and its unsuitability for agricultural or industrial development, the French remains largely unspoiled, an outstanding scenic and recreational resource.

## Natural Environment

### LANDSCAPE

The Precambrian rock of the French River area is one to one and a half billion years old. This rock was heavily folded and faulted during the long period of its formation, and the landscape still bears the marks of these ancient events. The faults generally trend roughly east to west. Most of the French River and its side channels and tributaries flow along these parallel breaks in the bedrock. The distinctive east-west pattern of the area's watercourses is clearly visible on any detailed map.

During the last million years, ice sheets swept repeatedly over Ontario, grinding and reworking the landscape. When the last glaciers retreated about 11,000 years ago, they left the thin, infertile soils and rounded, sculptured bedrock surfaces we see today. The mainly north to south direction of ice movement was responsible for a second set of landscape trends clearly visible on detailed maps, particularly at the mouth of the French River. The glaciers also ground grooves, scratches, and potholes in the rock which can be seen at various places along the river and especially in the mouth area. One of North America's most outstanding examples of glacial sculpturing and grooving is located at the Bass Creek boat tramway on the Eastern Outlet.

Bedrock and glacial action have shaped the French River into an unusual and scenic waterway. The river descends

through a worn, relatively flat Shield landscape, falling only 20 m from source to mouth. The French is really a series of long, narrow lakes and channels broken by rapids and low falls. Faulting and glaciation have made this river system a unique complex of straight lines and sharp bends.

### VEGETATION

The forests along the French River are typical of those all across the southern Shield between Lake Huron and the Ottawa River: a mixture of conifers (white pine, jack pine, white spruce, hemlock) and hardwoods (maple, birch, aspen, beech, basswood, red oak). Some conifers more typical of the boreal forests of northern Ontario, such as black spruce, are relatively common. Most of the forest is young, having been cut or burned in the last century.

The same landscape factors which made the French an important waterway for humans also made it an important passageway for the westward spread of plant species from the Atlantic coast and for the eastward spread of southern and western species. Virginian chain fern, an east coast species rare in Ontario, is common in the French River mouth area. At the Dalles Rapids, Virginian chain fern is more abundant than anywhere else in Canada. Eight other plant species rare in Ontario have been identified along the river. The Macoun Rocks, just off the mouth of the Main Outlet, are particularly notable for their rare plants.

# History

Above the Chaudière dams, the deep cold waters of the upper French River provide vital summer habitat for Lake Nipissing fish populations. By late summer, almost all of Lake Nipissing's adult whitefish, herring, and burbot are concentrated in the upper French.

The French River below the Chaudière dams is well known among anglers for its fine warm-water fishery. Pickerel, pike, muskellunge, and smallmouth bass are the principal sports species. The pools and swifts below dams, falls, and rapids provide excellent pickerel habitat, and the French River mouth area supports one of Georgian Bay's last remaining self-supporting pickerel populations. Pickerel is Ontario's number one game fish, and the French River pickerel fishery is a provincially significant resource.

Georgian Bay used to have outstanding lake trout and whitefish fisheries. Overfishing and sea lamprey have drastically changed things. Today, much reduced whitefish stocks, as well as pickerel, pike, perch, and chub, support some commercial fishing in the French River mouth area.

## WILDLIFE

The wildlife found along the French River is generally typical of the southern Shield. Wildlife productivity is not particularly high overall, but there are some areas of good habitat.

There are, however, some unusual wildlife species along the French River. The Massasauga rattlesnake, rare in Ontario, is probably as abundant at the French River mouth as anywhere in the province. The double-crested cormorant, an Atlantic coast bird increasingly uncommon in Ontario, breeds on the Gull Rocks east of the Bustard Islands.

Man has added to this list of unusual species. In the 1930s, buffalo (never present in northeastern Ontario) and elk (eradicated from Ontario in the 19th century) were reintroduced south of Sudbury. The elk herd is well established, while a few buffalo still survive. These wild populations are unique in Ontario, and both species range into the French River mouth area.

A convenient route crossing a barren landscape, the French River has always been more a highway than a place to live. This was just as true in prehistoric times as during the fur trade and industrial periods of our history.

After the glaciers withdrew about 11,000 years ago, the French River area was flooded by postglacial lakes. It was only about 5,000 years ago, when the river began to assume its present form as a westward drainage from Lake Nipissing, that prehistoric peoples could begin to make use of the area.

Archaeological evidence shows that use of the French River dates back at least 2,000 years. However, so far there is little evidence that the prehistoric peoples of northeastern Ontario used the river for more than a travel route and a temporary fishing and hunting ground. Further research could change this picture. About 50 archaeological sites have already been discovered along the river, and there are also several well known rock paintings (pictographs).

When Champlain arrived in 1615, the French River area was occupied by the Ojibwa. It quickly became apparent to the colonists of New France that the French River was vital to the westward expansion of the fur economy. The Ojibwa were well situated to capitalize on the new trade, which became essential to their economy also. But in 1670, the rival Hudson's Bay Company was incorporated. For 150 years, two fur trading empires struggled for supremacy: the Montreal fur trade using the famous "voyageur highway" to the west, and the Hudson Bay fur trade using the rivers of the Arctic watershed.

As long as small boats and human muscle remained the fastest and safest way to transport valuable goods through the Canadian interior, the French River was a critical link in the Montreal trade's voyageur highway. The voyageurs portaged around Recollet Falls as well as rapids at the mouth of the Western Channel. They also camped in some of the same places where recreationists camp today. Some of their canoes dumped while shooting rapids, leaving trade goods scattered along the river bottom. But the most important relic of the fur trade is that most of the French,

unlike most of the rest of the voyageur highway, looks much as it did to Samuel de Champlain or Alexander Mackenzie.

The unification of the competing fur trade companies into the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821 very much reduced the importance of Montreal as a fur trade base. Yet trade goods were already being moved by sail on the Great Lakes, bypassing the French River. Within the next 40 years, the coming of steamships, canals, and railways created fast and efficient transportation systems linking settled Canada to the head of Lake Superior, and ending forever the role of the French as anything more than a local water route. The fur resources of the area, the economic base of the Ojibwa, declined through overharvesting and neglect. In 1850, the Indians of Lakes Huron and Superior surrendered their lands to the Crown. The Dokis and French River Indian reserves were set aside by treaty for the Ojibwa of the French River area.

Between 1850 and 1900, the French River area became part of Ontario's resource frontier. The Canadian Pacific Railway reached North Bay and Sudbury in 1883. Steamships were launched to serve Lake Nipissing and the upper French, following the route of today's Chief Commanda II. Francophone agricultural settlers began to spread westward from Quebec into the arable pockets west of Lake Nipissing, including the Noeille area just north of the French River. Large scale logging began on the French in the 1880s; the logs were rafted across Georgian Bay or milled at the mouth of the river. Two sawmills were established at the mouth of the French just below the Dalles Rapids, giving rise to the community of French River (Caponanong) which had as many as 300 inhabitants. By 1930, however, the original French River community was abandoned and dismantled, and only foundations and a cemetery remain as evidence of this once thriving village. Commercial fishing was also active off the Bustard Islands by the late 19th century.

Tourism was promoted as early as the 1880s, when it became possible for adventurous visitors to travel by steamship to either end of the French and then explore the river by canoe. The construction in 1908 of the two railways which bridge the French, the Canadian Pacific and Canadian Northern (now Canadian National), improved access, and the first fishing camps were developed soon after. The French remained inaccessible by road, however, and cottages and lodges were few. All this changed in 1954, when Highway 69 reached the river, giving birth to the French River vacation industry of today. The French River - water highway for the voyageurs, dreamed of for a century as a navigable alternative to the St. Lawrence Seaway - is still a water highway, beckoning to the vacationers who are the basis of today's economy.



Macoun Rocks

# The French River Today

## PEOPLE

About 3,200 people live in the French River area, most of them some distance away from the river itself. The only communities actually on the river are Dokis on the Dokis Indian Reserve, population about 150, and the present day community of French River just off Highway 69, population about 600. There are a few other permanent residents scattered along the shoreline, mainly near Highway 69 and upstream from the Dokis Reserve. About 2,600 people live just north of the river in the agricultural region which centres on Noeleville. This area includes the incorporated Township of Cosby, Mason and Martland and the unincorporated townships of Bigwood (French River community excepted), Delamere, Falconer, and Scollard. The French River Indian Reserve borders on the south shore of the river, but its 80 or so residents, members of the Heney Inlet band, live at Pickerel on the Pickerel River.

The French River system is home to over 1,000 cottages and therefore over 4,000 seasonal residents, more than the total of permanent residents in the area.

Agriculture, the forest industry, and tourism are the major sources of earned income in the French River area.

## LAND USE

This section describes land use within the exterior boundary of the proposed park. The map on the centre pages shows the proposed exterior boundary. The exterior boundary includes:

- the main channels of the French River,
- all shorelines of the main channels 200 m back from the water's edge,
- all islands in the main channels,
- the entire French River-Pickerel River mouth area.

The exterior boundary does not include:

- the Dokis and French River Indian reserves, which are under Indian band control,
- the waters, islands, and shores of upper Wolseley Bay, the North Channel, Rangers Bay, Eighteen Mile Bay, and upper Dry Pine Bay.

There are about 40,000 ha of land and 20,000 ha of water within the exterior boundary of the proposed park. All the waters and almost all the lands are public lands and waters owned by the Province of Ontario. There are 1,450 ha of privately owned lands within the exterior boundary. Most of this private land is within 10 km of Highway 69. Another 11 ha of Crown land is privately used under the authority of land use permits, licences of occupation, and leases. These privately owned and used lands would not form part of the park.

Privately owned and used lands within

the proposed exterior boundary include:

- approximately 525 cottage properties
- 18 commercial tourist operation properties
- 15 private fish and hunt camps
- 3 private recreation camps
- 2 commercial fishing camps
- 1 trapper's cabin.

Many of the 525 or so cottage properties are not built on, while a few support more than one cottage. No Crown cottage lots have been sold since 1972. However, the number of cottages could increase considerably in the future, through continuing development of undeveloped properties, subdivision of large properties, and conversion of abandoned commercial tourist operation properties into cottage subdivisions.

There are two types of cottage development on the French River. Dispersed cottages, the only type in the days before road access, are common on the upper French above the Chaudière dams, and on Wanapitei and Ox bays on the lower French. All dispersed cottages are water accessible only. Cottage subdivisions are generally road accessible, and are concentrated near Highway 69, especially on Dry Pine Bay. However, there are water accessible subdivisions on Fourmile Island in Dry Pine Bay, on Pig Island in the Western Channel, and on Hartley Bay.

The 18 lodges within the proposed exterior boundary account for only about one third of the total French River resort industry, which is described in the Recreation and Tourism section below.

Private fish and hunt camp properties are held by individuals and small rod and gun clubs under land use permits issued annually. The three private recreation camps on the river include two youth camps and one recreational club.

There are no timber or mining rights currently in force within the proposed exterior boundary.

Ontario Hydro holds a water power reservation at the Five Mile Rapids. This reservation includes all lands which would be flooded if this site were developed for hydroelectric power. Crown lands within this reservation may not be disposed of for any purpose.

Highway 69 is the only road which crosses the main channel of the French River, and it provides the main road access to the area. There are secondary roads into Hartley Bay, Dry Pine Bay, Eighteen Mile Bay, Wolseley Bay, and the Dokis Reserve, all on the north side of the river.

Canadian Pacific and Canadian National rail lines cross the French River near Highway 69 and Hartley Bay respectively. Two Ontario Hydro 500 kV power lines also cross the river east of the French River Reserve. All these links between northern and southern Ontario are essential, but they also affect the scenic, unspoiled quality of the nearby stretches of the river.

Overall, the most developed area of the French River is the area within about 10 km of Highway 69. There are moderate levels of development along the upper French above the Chaudière dams, accessible from Lake Nipissing, and in the Wolseley Bay and Hartley Bay areas, accessible from Highway 69 via secondary roads. The least developed, most unspoiled areas of the river are the French River mouth area, and the stretch from the Dokis Reserve down to just above Highway 69.

## RESOURCE USE AND MANAGEMENT

### Water Management

The Chaudière and Little Chaudière dams on either side of Okikendawt Island control the level of Lake Nipissing. Above the dams, the French River is level with the lake. The Canada Department of Public Works regulates outflows to keep Lake Nipissing levels within a range suitable for navigation and fisheries.

All domestic water supplies and sewage disposal systems are individually provided. It is up to individual property owners to ensure that they are meeting Ontario Ministry of the Environment standards. The large volumes of water discharged from Lake Nipissing help ensure high water quality in most areas of the French River.

### Forest Resources

Timber productivity is poor on most of the lands within the proposed park area. There is no timber harvesting at present on Crown land within the exterior boundary. However, a number of areas on Crown land just outside the proposed park are being cut now or will be in future. Timber harvesting has also taken place on the Dokis Reserve.

### Mineral Resources

The French River is an area of generally low potential for valuable minerals. Exploration activity has also been low in the past. While there have been finds, none have been valuable enough to be worth exploiting.

Staking of mining claims is not permitted within the proposed exterior boundary. However, exploratory licences of occupation may be issued with restrictive conditions to minimize impacts on the natural values of the French River. There are no exploratory licences in force at present.

Sand and gravel resources are very poor. The only pits in the area are public wayside pits serving local road construction needs, and none of these pits are within the proposed exterior boundary.

## Trapping

The proposed park area falls within a total of 24 licensed traplines. About half of the furs taken from the area are beaver pelts. Beaver harvesting is regulated by quota to ensure that trapping pressure is in balance with productivity.

## RECREATION AND TOURISM

### Cottaging

As already mentioned, there are about 1,000 cottages along the French River system, including those outside the exterior boundary of the proposed park. About 60% of the cottages are road accessible, while about 40% are water accessible only. Most cottage owners are residents of Ontario.

Cottagers are major users of the recreational resources of the French River. They also contribute to the commercial tourist industry through local purchase of goods and services, including water taxi and boat storage services.

There is also some seasonal trailer camping near the French River which serves a cottaging function, primarily for residents of nearby centres such as Sudbury and North Bay.

### Commercial Tourist Industry

There are about 55 commercial tourist accommodation operators along the French River system, including those outside the exterior boundary of the proposed park. It is estimated that about 60,000 persons stay at French River area resorts each year.



Totem Point Lodge, Wolseley Bay

The total number of resorts has fallen in recent years. However, the industry is now reported to be operating near capacity, although the pattern varies from lodge to lodge. American visitation has fallen while Ontario use has increased. Ontarians now account for over half of all lodge visitors. This shift has been accompanied by a decline in length of stay, as well as in dollars spent per visitor after inflation has been accounted for. These trends are typical of those in the northern Ontario resort industry in general, but may have been speeded up on the French River by the decline in angling quality. However, angling remains the key attraction which the tourist industry has to offer.

Dokis

### Sport Fishing

Angling activity begins on the third Saturday of May, when the pickerel and pike season opens on most of the French River, and winds down in October. The peak months are June and July. Tourists account for most of the angling activity. There is some ice fishing in winter, mainly by local residents.

The fishery above the Chaudière dams is part of Lake Nipissing's, and angling activity is heavy on the upper French River. Recent data show that pickerel and perch populations are healthy, but that pike are being fished at close to maximum biological productivity levels.

On the lower French River, anglers tend to concentrate on the spawning, nursery, and feeding areas of the most popular species: pools and swifts for pickerel, bays and shallows for pike, smallmouth bass, and muskellunge. Also, anglers are constrained by the navigational obstacles on the river, and usually stay in the navigable area on which they are based. Therefore, the distribution of lodges and cottages has a great effect on fishing pressure. Dry Pine Bay and Wolseley Bay are among the most heavily fished areas on the lower French.

Although the data are incomplete, it appears that sports fishing pressure on the lower French River is heavy, and is exceeding the river's biological productivity. Anglers are catching fewer fish per hour, and smaller ones, than they were 10 or 20 years ago. The Ministry of Natural Resources has undertaken creel censuses and biological surveys to identify why angling quality has declined and how a healthy fishery can be maintained.

### Commercial and Domestic Fishing

Commercial fishing (for sale as food) is currently restricted to the Georgian Bay waters of the proposed park. The waters immediately off the French River mouth and around the Bustard Islands are closed to commercial fishing. However, small portions of the waters farther offshore fall within licensed commercial fishing

areas. Nine different operations are licensed to fish these waters, and some have camps on the Bustard Islands. The total volume of fish taken within the proposed park is small.

There are commercially exploitable herring and whitefish stocks in the upper French River. Although herring prices are currently too low for harvesting to be worthwhile, the waters above the Chaudière dams could be opened to commercial fishing in the future.

Most of the inland waters of the proposed park fall within areas licensed for bait fishing (for sale to anglers). A total of 19 licences include portions of the proposed park. The total volume of fish taken is very small.

Residents of the Dokis and French River reserves harvest fish from nearby waters for home consumption by band members.

### Hunting

The most popular game species in the proposed park area are deer, moose, and bear. Deer and moose hunting are heavily restricted to keep hunting pressure in line with productivity. On the north side of the French River, deer hunting is currently limited to a two week fall season for Ontario residents only, while moose hunting is open to nonresidents as well as residents for a six week season. On the south side, deer hunting is open to both residents and nonresidents for two weeks, while moose hunting is open to residents only for one week every second year. Bear hunting is open to residents and nonresidents for extended periods in both spring and fall.

The Georgian Bay shoreline and the upper French River are popular areas for waterfowl hunting. In general, however, small game and waterfowl hunting pressure along the river is light relative to productivity.

The elk and buffalo which range into the French River mouth area are protected from hunting.

There are several types of resorts on the French River.

- Central supply resorts are located at key road access points such as French River community, Hartley Bay, Wolseley Bay, and Dokis Reserve. These resorts provide marina and water taxi services for guests of other resorts, cottagers, and the general public.
- Remote resorts are water accessible only and cater almost exclusively to anglers and hunters. Facilities and services are traditional, and occupancy is determined almost entirely by fish and wildlife seasons. Before the highway era, all lodges were of this type.
- Diversified resorts still cater to anglers, but have also introduced other facilities and services such as campgrounds, restaurants, tennis courts, swimming pools, and games rooms. Most of these resorts are road accessible. These resorts are broadening their appeal to families vacationing in July and August by appealing to family members not interested in angling as well as those that are. Successful diversified resorts are thus able to maintain more consistent occupancy rates through the season.
- Highway operations are located on Highway 69 and are not oriented to the French River. They cater primarily to highway travellers, and offer services such as licensed restaurants, gas stations, and gift shops. However, these operations are naturally interested in identifying with and benefiting from tourist interest in the French River.

Another important tourist service on the French River is the Chief Commanda II. Operated by the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission, this vessel offers daily cruises and public transportation from North Bay to Dokis as well as other points on the upper French River.

The Chief Commanda II is widely publicized as a tourist attraction, and brings many day visitors into Dokis.

### Navigation

Falls, rapids, and dams have broken the French River into five navigable sections. These are:

- Lake Nipissing to Chaudière dams (level with Lake Nipissing)
- the rapids below the Chaudière dams to Five Mile Rapids
- Five Mile Rapids to Recollet Falls
- Recollet Falls to French River mouth area
- lower French River mouth area (level with Georgian Bay).

The historic portages of the French River allow canoeists to pass around these obstacles. At Bass Creek (Eastern Outlet) and Recollet Falls, the Ministry of Natural Resources maintains tramways which can accommodate small motorboats. With the aid of the tramways, and with care in navigating hazardous stretches, boaters can pass from Georgian Bay to Five Mile Rapids.

On the upper French River and along the Georgian Bay shore, Coast Guard buoys mark channels for safe navigation. The Canadian Hydrographic Service publishes navigational charts for these areas.

### Public Recreation

There are two public access points within the exterior boundary of the proposed park. The Canada Department of Fisheries and Oceans maintains a wharf with parking at the present day French River community. The Ministry of Natural Resources operates an access point with parking and camping on the Little French River near the Dokis Reserve.

The Ministry of Natural Resources also

provides a picnic area for boaters on Dead Island, just off the mouth of the Pickerel River.

The Ministry of Transportation and Communications picnic area at the south end of the Highway 69 bridge is certainly the most familiar public recreation facility on the French River. There are two historical plaques here, as well as a walking trail to Recollet Falls. For many travellers, this spot is the French River. Over three million people drive past here each year.

Many of the most important recreational facilities along the river are not formally designated or maintained. Portages are critical to the canoeist, while campsites are relied on by many motorboaters as well. Canoeists and motorboaters, lodge guests and cottagers use undeveloped Crown shoreline for swimming, relaxing, eating, exploring, fishing, and hunting.

While most users of public lands and facilities on the French River are based at cottages or lodges, canoe trippers are a separate market group making little use of private or commercial facilities. However, the river has not been widely promoted or intensively managed as a canoe route. There is no definite information on how many canoeists travel the French River, but it is estimated that the river has the potential to accommodate at least 10,000 canoe trip user days per year.

Finally, a fair number of nearby residents boat on the French River independent of any lodge or cottage base. These include not only people living right in the French River area, but also those living one to two hours away, mainly in the Sudbury and North Bay areas. Most of this use is on a day visit basis, and tends to be concentrated near the major road access points, as well as in the upper French River accessible from Lake Nipissing.

### Market Trends

The recreation and tourism market trends currently being experienced on the French River are typical of those affecting northern Ontario as a whole. However, compared to many other northern Ontario recreation areas, the French River has something extra to offer in terms of outstanding scenery and history. This is being recognized by the area's tourist industry, and in trying to take best advantage of changing markets, tourist operators are publicizing the area's unspoiled, scenic quality and its historical atmosphere.

Recreation and tourism on the French River were originally based almost exclusively on fish and wildlife resources. Declines in fisheries and changes in the marketplace are emphasizing the present and potential value of heritage resources as a visitor attraction. However, the sports fishery will remain vital to the success of the tourist industry. Both fisheries resources and heritage values will need to be protected and conserved if they are to provide a balanced basis for high quality recreation and a healthy tourism industry.



Bad River Channel

# Resource Management Issues

No place in Ontario is free of resource management issues and problems, and the French River has its share.

## Land Management

- There is widespread public concern that no more road access to the French River should be developed.
- There are very few authorized dump sites in the French River area. This has led to excessive accumulations of garbage at the authorized dumps which do exist, and random unauthorized dumping on Crown and private lands.

## Water Management

- Property damage from flooding and water level changes persists in certain stretches of the French River below the Chaudière dams.
- Water level fluctuations in the river can also impair fisheries habitat, particularly during spawning.
- Along the Georgian Bay shoreline, seiches and storms cause flooding and property damage and endanger navigation.
- Although water quality on the French River is generally good, there are problems, including:
  - the need to boil or chlorinate drinking water,
  - the need to limit consumption of certain sports fish, as recommended by the Ministry of the Environment,
  - increasing aquatic weed growth, especially from Wolseley Bay down to Ox Bay,
  - at the mouth of the Wanapitei River, sulphates from smelting operations upstream in the Sudbury area,
  - in Wolseley Bay, sediment from agriculture upstream in the Noellville area.

## Forest Resources

- Although there will be no timber harvesting within 200 m of the shoreline, some evidence of harvesting activities may still be visible or audible from certain stretches of the French River.

## Mineral Resources

- Any mineral exploration activities conducted under exploratory licences of occupation could impair heritage and recreational values.

## Fisheries

- Declines in fish yields on the lower

French River are a major concern. Many reasons for this situation have been suggested, including:

- excessive angling,
- excessive commercial fishing,
- poaching,
- impairment of fisheries habitat due to flooding, water level fluctuations, and water quality problems,
- unfavourable changes within fisheries communities, due to changes in the balance between native species, and the introduction of non-native species.

## Recreation and Tourism

- In areas where there is considerable motorboat traffic, conflicts which have arisen include:
  - shore property damage and bank erosion caused by wakes,
  - safety conflicts with canoeists.
- Heavy use and little or no management have resulted in deterioration of some Crown land access points, campsites, shorelines, and heritage resources. Problems include:
  - congestion,
  - littering,
  - site deterioration through wear and tear,
  - tree cutting and vandalism,
  - defacing of rock paintings (pictographs).
- Trespassing and vandalism by recreationists have been reported on private property and Indian reserves.

## What if a Park is Established?

Establishment of a French River provincial park would heighten the importance

of some of the preceding issues and problems, and would also raise some new ones.

- Recreational pressures on Crown land might increase. Proper management of increased recreational pressures would in the long run require more regulation of recreational activity.
- Increased recreational pressures might also raise some public safety issues. These include:
  - the dangers which rapids, and the open waters of the French River mouth area, pose to inexperienced recreationists,
  - the dangers which Massasauga rattlesnakes pose to recreationists in the French River mouth area, and especially at the original French River community (Coponaning).
- At the same time, increased recreation in the French River mouth area could affect the rattlesnake population. Massasauga rattlesnakes are a rare species, vulnerable to and readily persecuted by man.
- Other concerns about park establishment have been raised by members of the public. These concerns relate to perceived conflicts between provincial park planning and management policies and the French River as it is today. However, flexible application of provincial park policies to the French River should ensure that none of the following become major issues:
  - expropriation of private property,
  - public sector competition with the commercial tourist industry,
  - prohibition of motorboats,
  - prohibition of commercial fishing,
  - prohibition of hunting,
  - prohibition of trapping,
  - relaxation of fire suppression.



### Nature Reserve Zones

- NR1 Dalles Rapids  
Virginian chain-fern  
Glacial grooves
- NR2 French River Townsite (Coponanning)  
Massasauga rattlesnake  
Townsite remains
- NR3 Bass Creek Boat Tramway  
Glacial grooves and sculpturing
- NR4 Macoun Rocks  
Several rare plant species
- NR5 Gull Rocks  
Double-crested cormorant

### Historical Zones

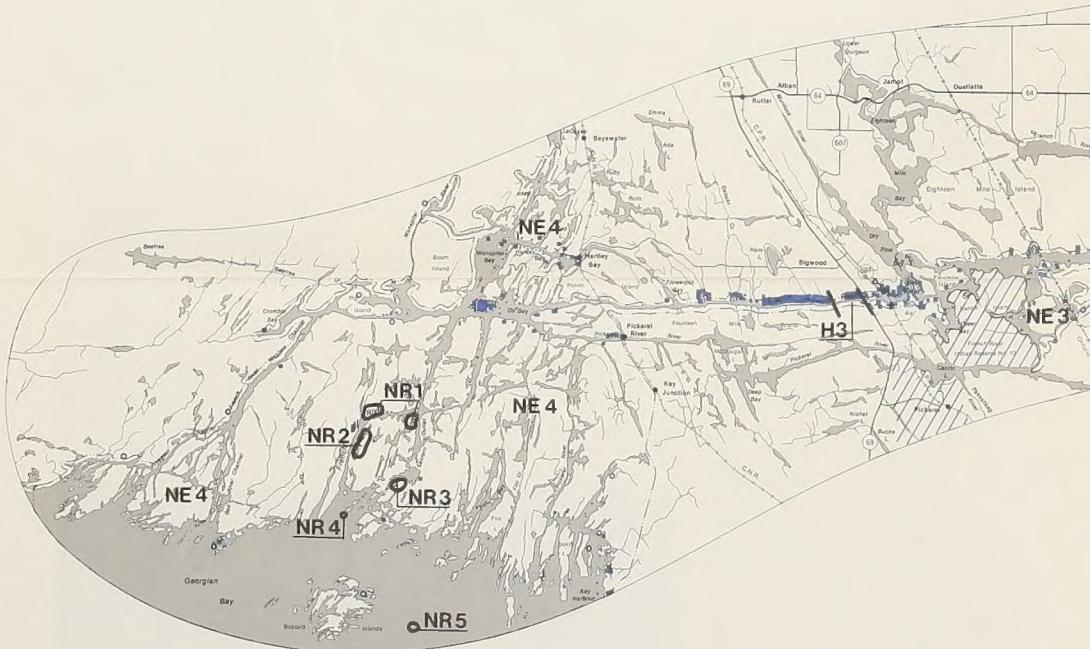
- H1 Chaudière Rapids  
Voyageur route  
Archaeological sites (land and underwater)  
Rock painting (pictograph)  
Glacial pothole
- H2 Five Mile Rapids  
Voyageur route  
Archaeological sites (land and underwater)
- H3 Recollet Falls  
Voyageur route  
Archaeological sites (land and underwater)  
Rock painting (pictograph)

### Natural Environment Zones

- NE1 Lake Nipissing to Chaudière Rapids
- NE2 Chaudière Rapids to Five Mile Rapids
- NE3 Five Mile Rapids to Recollet Falls
- NE4 Recollet Falls to Georgian Bay

### Access Zone

- A1 Little French River



### Note

All shoreline strips within the exterior park 200 m deep.

Scale 1 : 182,000





## French River

### Candidate Provincial Waterway Park Proposed Boundary and Zoning

July 1984

#### LEGEND

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	Exterior Park Boundary
	Patent
	Lease
	Licence of Occupation
	Land Use Permit
	Indian Reserve
	Zone Boundary
	NR 1
	Zone Designation (see list above)
	Not included in Park

boundary are



# Planning and Development Prospects

## A FRENCH RIVER PROVINCIAL PARK: PLANNING BACKGROUND

### Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources

- 1963: The North Georgian Bay Recreational Reserve is established, including French River and lands to the south and west. A subsequent Crown land use plan identifies recreation as the highest priority use in the area.
- 1978: Ontario Provincial Parks Policy is approved, along with planning and management policies for six classes of provincial parks, including waterway parks. The policies for waterway parks are much more flexible than those previously in force for "wild rivers", and are designed to accommodate all types of waterways with significant natural, historical, and recreational values.
- 1978: The French River is identified as having high priority for further study of its waterway park potential.
- 1979: The Ministry participates with Parks Canada in the French River Pilot Study (see Parks Canada section below).
- 1982: The French River is formally identified as a potential provincial park to be considered in land use planning for Ministry administrative districts.
- 1983: Land Use Guidelines for Ministry administrative districts are published. In the Sudbury and North Bay district guidelines, the French River is designated as a candidate waterway park, with maintenance of most existing land uses and activities. The final decision on park designation and boundaries is to await preparation of a management plan.
- 1984: The Ministry nominates the French River for designation as a Canadian Heritage River. The Ministry and Parks Canada agree to jointly prepare the French River Management Plan.

### Parks Canada, Canada Department of the Environment

- 1970s: Parks Canada studies identify the French River mouth area as a natural area of Canadian significance.
- 1979: Parks Canada funds the French River Pilot Study in cooperation with the Ministry of Natural Resources. This study, a first of its kind, provides a model for federal-provincial cooperation in protecting nationally significant heritage waterways, and yields detailed background information on all aspects of the French River's natural, historical, and recreational resources.

- 1984: The Government of Canada, represented by Parks Canada, and the provincial and territorial governments announce the establishment of the Canadian Heritage Rivers program. The new Canadian Heritage Rivers Board receives Ontario's nomination of the French River as a Canadian Heritage River, and recommends designation of the river on submission of a management plan. Parks Canada and the Ministry of Natural Resources agree to jointly prepare the French River Management Plan.

## OTHER LAND USE PLANS

### Corporation of the Township of Cosby, Mason and Martland

Cosby, Mason and Martland does not have an official plan, but it does have a planning strategy and a zoning bylaw. The municipality's French River shoreline within the proposed park is classified as rural, which is compatible with park designation.

### West Nipissing Planning Area

The unorganized townships of Falconer, Latchford, and Bertram form part of the West Nipissing Planning Area. There is an official plan for the planning area, and a zoning bylaw is now in preparation. The planning area's French River shoreline within the proposed park is classified as a rural development zone, which is compatible with park designation.

### Townships of Bigwood and Allan - Minister's Zoning Order

Private land use in the unorganized townships of Bigwood and Allan is regulated by a Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing zoning order. The Minister's zoning order classifies French River shoreline within the proposed park as seasonal residential, commercial resort, open space, or rural, on the basis of

existing use. Future residential development in areas not currently used for this purpose will be discouraged. Since private lands would not be included within park boundaries, the Minister's zoning order is compatible with park designation.

## Floodplain Restrictions

Floodplain mapping has been prepared for the Wolseley Bay and Dry Pine Bay areas. This mapping identifies areas prone to flooding at least once every 100 years on average. These lands are going to be designated as hazard lands in the Cosby, Mason and Martland zoning bylaw and the Minister's zoning order for Bigwood Township. New development will be restricted on these hazard lands.

## Dokis and French River Indian Reserves

The two Indian reserves on the French River do not have community plans. Planning on reserves is under Indian band jurisdiction. However, the Ministry of Natural Resources may assist the bands in resource management if invited to do so.

## DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS

### Flood Control Measures

The federal and Ontario governments have jointly undertaken a series of flood damage reduction studies for the Lake Nipissing-French River drainage basin. In February 1984, a Sturgeon River-Lake Nipissing-French River Watershed Management Advisory Board was established to provide input from all affected interests in implementing a flood control and water management program for the basin.

Currently under way is a study of the effectiveness of different methods of reducing flood damage on the French River below the Chaudière dams. Alternatives being considered include divert-



Upper French River

ing flows into side channels, removing obstructions in the main channel, widening or deepening narrow stretches of the main channel, and building weirs to control peak flows.

Flow diversion, channelization, and weir construction could have negative impacts on fisheries habitat and archaeological sites. On the other hand, diversion of flows into Wolesey Bay could improve water quality there during low flow periods.

#### Hydroelectric Power Development

Ontario Hydro has identified three sites along the French River as having some hydroelectric power potential: the Five Mile Rapids (where Hydro holds a water power reserve), Lower Chaudière Rapids below the Chaudière Dam, and Dalles Rapids in the French River mouth area. There are no active proposals for development at any of these sites, however.

Development of dams and reservoirs could have significant negative impacts on natural, historical, scenic, and recreational values and on private property. Hydroelectric power development would not be compatible with waterway park designation.

#### Transportation and Utility Crossings

Highway 69 has been identified for future reconstruction as a four lane divided highway. This would involve construction of northbound lanes and a bridge immediately east of the present highway. However, twinning will not be required until the 1990s at least.

Canadian National may require double tracking of its rail line in the future. A new track and bridge would be constructed immediately east of the present line. Double tracking will not be required until the 1990s at least.

Canadian Pacific does not foresee any need to double track its rail line.

Ontario Hydro expects that an additional high voltage link between Sudbury and southern Ontario will be needed in the late 1990s. Environmental and engineering assessments would be required to identify the best route, either across the French River or east of North Bay.

#### French River Waterway

Over the past 100 years, there have been many proposals for development of a navigable waterway along the French River. These have ranged from Trent-Severn type recreational waterways to Seaway type ship canals, from links between Lake Nipissing and Georgian Bay to links between Montreal and Georgian Bay via the Ottawa and Mattawa rivers. High costs and low benefits have always deterred implementation. In more recent years, environmental concerns have been raised as well.

Development of a navigable waterway



Five Finger Rapids

could have significant negative impacts on natural, historical, and scenic values, on current recreational values, and on private property. On the other hand, making the entire river navigable by motorboats would encourage the devel-

opment of cruising-oriented recreation like that found on the Trent-Severn. Construction of dams, locks, and canals would not be compatible with the type of waterway park proposed for the French River.

## Proposed Park Policy

#### WHAT IS A WATERWAY PARK?

French River Provincial Park would be classified as a waterway park in the Ontario provincial parks system.

Waterway parks incorporate outstanding recreational water routes with representative natural features and historical resources to provide high quality recreational and educational experiences. They may range from "wild" rivers offering challenge and solitude for a few visitors, to highly developed corridors offering a wide range of recreational opportunities for many. Activities may range from river travel by canoe in remote natural areas, to motorboat travel, car camping, and day use on both land and water in developed areas. What all waterway parks have in common as the reason for their existence is a water route which can be travelled for pleasure. They offer to their users a chance to experience the power and continuity of Ontario's great rivers and to appreciate the central place of those rivers in the natural and cultural heritage of the province.

Waterway parks contribute to the achievement of all four objectives of the Ontario provincial parks system: protection, recreation, heritage appreciation, and tourism.

Five waterway parks have been established in Ontario, and many more have been identified as candidates for designation within the next few years. One of the waterway parks already established is Mattawa River Provincial Park, which includes the Mattawa River from east of North Bay to just above the Ottawa

River. The Mattawa, like the French, is a relatively unspoiled section of the voyageur highway, and both waterways have significant heritage values, especially historical ones. The Mattawa River and proposed French River provincial parks would be managed to complement each other, in full recognition of their common heritage values.

#### WHAT IS A CANADIAN HERITAGE RIVER?

On submission of a management plan, the French River would be designated a Canadian Heritage River, one of the first to be recognized in this way.

Canadian Heritage Rivers are rivers which:

- exhibit natural heritage of outstanding Canadian value,
- exhibit human heritage of outstanding Canadian value, or
- provide recreational opportunities of outstanding Canadian value.

A river of outstanding Canadian value is one that is outstanding at least within its province. The size and integrity of a Canadian Heritage River should be sufficient that the river's outstanding values can be protected and maintained.

#### PROPOSED PARK GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

##### Goal

*To protect the outstanding landscape, natural features, and historical resources of French River Provincial Park and to provide high quality recreational and educational experiences in the Park.*

#### **Protection Objective**

To protect the nationally and provincially significant waterway environment of French River Provincial Park, incorporating outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational features.

#### **Tourism Objective**

To complement and strengthen the

French River area tourist industry, and encourage residents of and visitors to Ontario to discover and experience the French River area.

#### **Recreation Objective**

To provide day use opportunities and back country travel and camping opportunities in French River Provincial Park which will complement those provided by tourist operators and cottagers.

#### **Heritage Appreciation Objective**

To provide opportunities for unstructured individual exploration and appreciation of the natural and cultural heritage of French River Provincial Park.

## **Proposed Land Use and Development Policies**

### **EXTERIOR BOUNDARY**

The proposed exterior boundary of French River Provincial Park is shown on the map on the centre pages of this paper. The 200 m shoreline strip is a minimum requirement for provincial waterway parks. With this exception, there are many possible ways in which the exterior boundary could be drawn, and there are many possible additions to and deletions from the proposed park area. We welcome your comments on the boundary we have suggested, and your suggestions for any changes.

### **CROWN LAND ACQUISITION AND DISPOSITION**

No private lands will be expropriated within the exterior boundary of the park. Private lands will be acquired only when a landowner offers for sale property which is desirable for resource protection purposes or park management needs.

Crown lands may be disposed of only where:

- existing commercial tourist operations wish to expand,
- new commercial tourist operations are proposed which would complement park objectives,
- holders of exploratory licences of occupation apply for mining leases consistent with the terms and conditions attached to those licences,
- essential public services (such as road, rail, and utility crossings) require additional lands,
- and, in all cases, park heritage values are not unduly impaired.

Any lands acquired or disposed of within the exterior boundary will automatically be added to or withdrawn from the park.

### **PRIVATE LANDS**

Privately owned and used property within the park's exterior boundary would not be included in the park. These lands are highlighted on the map on the centre pages of this paper. The use of these lands will continue to be regulated by other agencies:

- in the incorporated Township of Cosby, Mason and Martland, by Township Council,



Private recreational club, Wanapitei Bay

- in the unorganized townships of Falconer, Latchford, and Bertram, by West Nipissing Planning Board,
- in the remaining unorganized townships, by the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (in Bigwood and Allan, under the authority of the Minister's zoning order).

Indian Lands would not form part of the park. Land use on the Dokis and French River reserves would continue to be governed by the Dokis and Henvey Inlet band councils respectively. While the Ministry of Natural Resources has no formal input into planning and development on Indian reserves, the Ministry will seek to maintain a cooperative relationship with the two bands so as to encourage compatible development of reserve shorelands.

On other lands, the Ministry of Natural Resources has formal input into all plan review and approval. The Ministry will seek to protect park heritage values from incompatible development on private lands. The Ministry will first make every effort to bring about a negotiated solution acceptable to all parties. Where a negotiated solution cannot be achieved, the Ministry will be prepared to advance its concerns through the various public decision making forums provided for under the Planning Act.

### **ZONING**

Lands within French River Provincial

Park would be zoned so that they might be allocated to their most appropriate uses within the Park. Four types of zones are proposed.

- Nature reserve zones include any significant earth and life science features in the waterway corridor which require management distinct from that in adjacent zones.
- Historical zones include any significant historical resources in the waterway corridor which require management distinct from that in adjacent zones, and sections of the corridor in which there are outstanding opportunities for identification with historic waterway users and activities.
- Natural environment zones include aesthetic sections of the waterway corridor in which there is minimum development required to support low intensity recreational water travel activities, and associated aesthetic landscapes.
- Access zones serve as staging areas where minimum facilities support use of less developed portions of the water route.

The proposed zones are shown on the map on the centre pages of this paper. A list of the zones, and the key features protected in each, accompanies the map.



## LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

This section lists resource uses, recreational uses, and types of development which would be permitted on park lands and waters. These are classified by zone type.

Resource and recreational uses will be subject to standard Ministry of Natural Resources regulations and/or French River Provincial Park management policies. These are discussed further in the Proposed Management Policies section below.

For simplicity, only those uses of interest to the largest numbers of people are listed here. Specialized uses of limited interest will be permitted or prohibited by analogy to the lists provided here, or by reference to the general planning and management policies for provincial waterway parks. For example, kayaking will be treated in the same way as canoeing; snowshoeing, in the same way as cross country skiing.

All development in the park will be carried out in accordance with approved site and development plans which satisfy environmental assessment requirements.



Glacial sculpturing, Bustard Islands

- portages and boat tramways
- necessary signs for route identification
- access roads (existing only)
- back country campsites
- visitor information facilities (Zones H1, H3 only)
- interpretive facilities
- historical restorations or reconstructions where appropriate
- facilities for Park research and management

### Natural Environment Zones

#### Resource uses permitted:

- mineral exploration (scenic, natural heritage, archaeological, and historical sites excepted)
- commercial fishing (Zones NE1, NE4 only)
- commercial bait fishing
- domestic fishing
- trapping

#### Recreational uses permitted:

- canoeing
- motorboating
- hiking
- cross country skiing
- snowmobiling
- sport fishing
- hunting
- back country camping
- heritage appreciation

#### Development permitted:

- trails
- portages and boat tramways
- necessary signs for route identification
- access roads (existing only)
- basic boat-in day use facilities
- back country campsites
- minimal interpretive facilities
- temporary facilities for Park research and management

### Access Zone

#### Resource uses permitted:

- mineral exploration (scenic, natural heritage, archaeological, and historical sites excepted)
- commercial bait fishing
- domestic fishing
- trapping

#### Recreational uses permitted:

- canoeing
- motorboating
- hiking
- cross country skiing
- snowmobiling
- sport fishing
- hunting
- car camping
- back country camping
- heritage appreciation

#### Development permitted:

- trails
- portages and boat tramways
- necessary signs
- access roads (existing only) and parking
- basic day use facilities
- basic car campgrounds
- back country campsites
- visitor information facilities
- interpretive facilities
- facilities for Park research and management

### Nature Reserve Zones

(note: there is no water surface in these zones)

#### Resource uses permitted:

- trapping

#### Recreational uses permitted:

- hiking
- cross country skiing
- snowmobiling (Zones NR2, NR3, NR5 only)
- hunting (Zones NR1, NR3, NR4 only)
- back country camping (Zone NR3 only)
- heritage appreciation

#### Development permitted:

- trails
- portages and boat tramways
- necessary signs for route identification
- back country campsites (Zone NR3 only)
- minimal interpretive facilities
- temporary facilities for Park research and management

### Historical Zones

#### Resource uses permitted:

- commercial bait fishing
- domestic fishing
- trapping

#### Recreational uses permitted:

- canoeing
- motorboating
- hiking
- cross country skiing
- snowmobiling
- sport fishing
- hunting
- back country camping
- heritage appreciation

#### Development permitted:

- trails

# Proposed Management Policies

## Land Management

No new public access roads will be developed in the park.

Timber stands on that portion of Boom Island outside the park have been allocated for future cutting. Access to this resource will be through park lands, crossing the channel on the north side of Boom Island. It has not yet been determined whether a winter crossing only or an all weather bridge will be required. The access road will not be open to the public.

Additional road, rail, and utility line crossings of the French River may be necessary to meet essential public service needs. Before disposing of park lands for these purposes, the Ministry of Natural Resources will work closely with proponents to ensure that:

- all reasonable alternatives have been considered,
- wherever possible, new crossings are located next to existing crossings of the same type,
- impacts on park heritage values and on the river's scenic and unspoiled quality are minimized.

Existing unauthorized dumps will be cleaned up, and efforts will be made to prevent unauthorized dumping from recurring. Measures will be taken to reduce or eliminate garbage disposal by back country users (see Recreation Management section below). Where there is no practical alternative, dumps may be developed in the park, within natural environment and access zones only. The one authorized dump now operating in the park, located just east of Satchels Bay, will be maintained.

## Water Management

The French River flood control study now under way may result in proposals for flow diversion, channel improvement, and weir construction. The Ministry of Natural Resources is participating in this study. Before approving any proposal involving Park waters, the Ministry will ensure that:

- all reasonable alternatives have been considered,
- any positive impacts on water quality are maximized,
- any negative impacts on park heritage values are minimized.

Development of hydroelectric power or a navigable waterway would not be compatible with park objectives, and would likely have major negative impacts on the park's natural, historic, scenic, and recreational values. There are no active proposals for either type of development. However, the Ministry of Natural Resources will meet with Ontario Hydro to determine the anticipated need and outlook for power development, and the scale and impacts on the park of any projected works. Should any power or waterway development proposals be made in future, they would require:

- full scale environmental assessment,

- reconsideration of French River Provincial Park designation, objectives, and policies.

The Ministry of Natural Resources will continue to promote good water quality on the French River, and will continue to work with the Ministry of the Environment and landowners to monitor water quality and deal with problem situations.



## Natural Heritage Management

Natural heritage sites will be protected from incompatible development wherever they occur in the park. Incompatible resource uses and recreational activities will be prohibited if necessary to protect the significant values of natural heritage sites. Where natural heritage features occur on private land along the waterway corridor, the Ministry of Natural Resources will work with landowners to encourage and assist them in protecting and caring for the features on their properties.

Where practical and desirable, significant natural features on park lands will be managed so as to perpetuate the values from which their significance arises. For example, a particular stage of natural succession or habitat condition may be maintained. Otherwise, natural evolution will be permitted to occur without human interference.



Five Finger Rapids

Additional non-native plant and animal species will not be introduced to the park. Where non-native plant species are already established in nature reserve or historical zones and threaten the values for which those zones have been established, a management program for their eradication may be developed. Missing native plant species may be re-established if biologically feasible and acceptable, usually to rehabilitate the quality of areas suffering past or present resource or recreational use impacts. Fertilizers may not be used for this purpose. Missing native animal species may be reintroduced, and existing populations replenished, if biologically feasible and acceptable.

## Cultural Heritage Management

The Ministry of Natural Resources will continue to work with the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture in identifying archaeological and historical sites which should be protected along the waterway corridor.

Cultural heritage sites will be protected from incompatible development wherever they occur in the park. Incompatible resource uses and recreational activities will be prohibited if necessary to protect the significant values of cultural heritage sites. Where cultural heritage resources occur on private land along the waterway corridor, the Ministry of Natural Resources will work with landowners to encourage and assist them in protecting and caring for the features on their properties.

Management strategies for individual archaeological and historical sites on park lands may range from allowing features to evolve without human interference, to managing features so as to stabilize their present conditions, to restoring and reconstructing features to more closely approach their historic conditions. Any restorations or reconstructions will conform to high standards of historical authenticity and will complement and not interfere with the integrity of historical resources.

## Forest Management

The Ministry of Natural Resources will continue to suppress all fires in the park.

Programs may be developed to control forest insects and diseases in the park where these threaten significant heritage, aesthetic, or economic values. Where control is desirable, it will be directed as narrowly as possible to the specific insect or disease so as to have minimal effects on other components of the park's environment. Biological control will be used wherever feasible.

## Mineral Management

The Ministry of Natural Resources may issue exploratory licences of occupation in those areas of the park indicated in the Proposed Land Use and Development Policies section. Any licences issued will include specific conditions restricting exploration and development so as to ensure that park heritage values are protected.

Exploratory licences cover specified areas and are issued for three year terms. On meeting specified conditions, licenceholders may apply to lease lands needed for extracting any valuable minerals found.

## Fisheries Management

Sports and commercial fishing will continue to be managed in accordance with policies and regulations prevailing in the area.

There will be a special emphasis on monitoring and managing the French River sports fishery, so as to maintain and enhance the health of the fishery and the quality of angling recreation.

## Wildlife Management

Hunting and trapping will continue to be managed in accordance with policies and regulations prevailing in the area.

Animal populations may be controlled when essential to protect human health and safety or the health of animal species outside the park. Where control is desirable, techniques will be used which have minimal effects on other components of the park's environment. Any hunting or trapping required in the control of nuisance animals will be carried out under the strict supervision of, or directly by, the Ministry of Natural Resources.

The preceding comments regarding animal control do not apply to Massasauga rattlesnakes. The Ministry will seek to protect rattlesnake habitat in the park, and inform and educate park users so as to minimize persecution of snakes and injury to humans.

## Recreation Management

A management program will be developed to apply to back country canoe and motorboat recreation in the park. The program will be implemented gradually as the various elements are needed and can be funded.

- Existing use levels will be determined.
- Existing and potential campsites and day use sites will be identified.
- The amount of overnight back country use which the river can accommodate will be determined.
- Camping will be limited to designated sites on part or all of the river. Party size and length of stay at

campsites may also be limited if necessary.

- Existing campsites and day use sites will be improved, and new sites developed as required.
- Users will be required to carry out nonburnable garbage. The use of cans and bottles may be prohibited if necessary.
- Permits and fees will be introduced for camping.
- A program of regular maintenance and enforcement will be introduced.
- If the preceding measures are not sufficient to ensure that use does not exceed capacity, the number of overnight travellers entering or using the river at any one time may be restricted through a quota system on part or all of the river.

A back country recreation map will be prepared for the park, showing portages, designated campsites, etc. Other publications will inform back country users about do's and don'ts while in the park.

## Tourism Development

The Ministry of Natural Resources will work closely with the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation and commercial tourist operators to strengthen the French River tourist industry and promote its development. With the exception of back country campsites and the basic car campground at the Little French River access point, all accommodation in the French River area will be provided by commercial tourist operators and cottagers. Commercial tourism development will be encouraged in directions which complement resource protection and recreational use in the park. The park's heritage resources will be recognized as a valuable asset to the tourist industry.

Consideration will be given to developing

a French River area tourism marketing strategy in cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation and local tourist industry, cottager, business, and community groups. The objective would be to coordinate the marketing of park and area attractions, facilities, and services.

Information booths may be developed at strategic locations both on and off park lands, as they are needed and can be funded. These booths would provide park visitors and other travellers with information on park and area resources and facilities.

## Heritage Appreciation

Publications will be developed to acquaint visitors with the park's heritage values and resources.

The following heritage appreciation facilities may be developed as they are needed and can be funded:

- appropriate signage on Highway 69,
- historical markers on portages,
- display panels at natural and cultural heritage sites of particular interest,
- a Voyageur Centre, somewhere near Highway 69 but not necessarily inside the park, to interpret the historical significance of the French River to the widest possible audience; the feasibility of this project would have to be studied, and a location determined.

## Scientific Research

Scientific research by qualified individuals which contributes to knowledge of natural and cultural history and to environmental and recreational management will be encouraged in the park. All research programs will require Ministry of Natural Resources approval and must also meet all other applicable provincial and federal government requirements.

# How You Can Take Part

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

In this paper, we have referred to reports which provide more information on the French River, and documents which set out the planning policies on which any French River Management Plan must be based. These reports and documents include:

### French River Canadian Heritage Waterway Pilot Study

8 volumes

Ministry of Natural Resources and Parks Canada, 1979-80

- Assessment of Earth Science Processes and Features
- Life Science and Interpretive Potentials



- Man-Made Heritage Resource Identification and Evaluation
- Preliminary Assessment of Recreation-Tourism and Other Land Uses
- Landscape Evaluation
- Summary of Resource Significance and Planning Issues
- Directions for the Future
- Project Evaluation

#### **Ontario Provincial Parks Planning and Management Policies**

Ministry of Natural Resources, 1978  
**Canadian Heritage Rivers System: Objectives, Principles and Procedures**  
 Parks Canada, 1983

#### **Sudbury District Land Use Guidelines**

North Bay District Land Use Guidelines  
 Parry Sound District Land Use Guidelines

Ministry of Natural Resources, 1983

#### **North Georgian Bay Recreational Reserve: A Summary Report**

Department of Lands and Forests, 1971

All of these reports and documents are public information. Although we cannot provide individuals with copies, you are welcome to visit either of the following locations during normal business hours where copies are available for reference purposes.

#### **Sudbury**

Ministry of Natural Resources District Office, Highway 69 South

#### **Toronto**

Ministry of Natural Resources Library, Whitney Block, Queen's Park

#### **ADVISORY GROUP**

The French River Advisory Group is working closely with Ministry of Natural

Resources staff in preparing the French River Management Plan. The Advisory Group is reviewing and commenting on the planning proposals and on all information being distributed to the public. Advisory Group members, and the local interests they represent, are:

#### **Shirley Ashwasagai**

Henvey Inlet Indian Band

#### **Robert Boudignon**

Hartley Bay Local Roads Board

#### **Bill Campbell**

Key Harbour Association

#### **Eric Crane**

French River Resorts Association

#### **Robert Desrochers**

Trapper

#### **Richard Lapointe**

Back country canoeist

#### **Allen Lyte**

Key Harbour Association

#### **Frank Mariotti**

Federation of Ontario Naturalists

#### **Bob O'Hara**

Cottage

#### **Martin Restoule**

Dokis Indian Band

#### **Mark Scriver**

Canoe Ontario

#### **Fred Stoerig**

Northeastern Regional Trappers' Council

#### **Dean Wenborne**

French River Resorts Association

#### **Gordon White**

Cottage

#### **Hans Wiemer**

Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, Zone 2

#### **OPEN HOUSES**

In August, the Ministry of Natural Resources will hold two informal open houses in the French River area. You will be able to see displays and a slide show about the French River, and Ministry staff will be there to answer your questions and receive your comments.

The background reports and documents listed above will also be available for you to look at. You are invited to join us at:

#### **Dokis**

Dokis Community Hall

Saturday, August 11

1:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

#### **Alban**

Alban Community Centre

Sunday, August 12

1:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

#### **INTEREST GROUPS**

Ministry of Natural Resources staff will be pleased to meet with interest groups on request, to answer questions and discuss concerns. If your group wishes to meet with us, please contact Mr. John Simpson at the address given below, no later than September 14, 1984.

#### **WRITTEN COMMENTS**

Whether you attend an interest group meeting, visit an open house, or simply read this paper, your comments are most welcome. We need to know what you think about our proposals so that we can prepare the best possible French River Management Plan! Please write to Mr. John Simpson at the address given below, no later than October 5, 1984.

#### **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?**

- All public reaction - comments, meetings, and open houses - will be carefully reviewed by the French River Committee and French River Advisory Group.
- The Management Plan proposals will be revised by the French River Committee on the basis of public input received, and will then be reviewed by the Advisory Group.
- A final draft Management Plan, with recommendations as to whether there should be a park, and if so, what its boundaries should be, will be forwarded to the Minister of Natural Resources for his review.
- After the Management Plan has been reviewed by the Minister, it will be published. Everyone on our mailing list will receive a copy of the Management Plan. Our target is to publish the Management Plan by April 1985.
- The Ministry of Natural Resources will then submit the Management Plan to the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board. The Minister of Natural Resources and the Federal Minister of the Environment will then be able to designate the French River as a Canadian Heritage River.
- If establishment of a provincial park is recommended to and approved by the Minister of Natural Resources, the Minister will recommend to the Ontario Cabinet that a French River Provincial Park be established by regulation under the Provincial Parks Act.

Do you need more information or want to let us know what you think? Please direct all questions and comments to:

**Mr. John Simpson**  
**District Manager**  
**Ministry of Natural Resources**  
**Box 3500, Station A**  
**Sudbury, Ontario**  
**P3A 4S2**  
**(705) 522-7823**

Inside Sudbury District but outside local calling area - ask operator for Zenith 73000

This paper is being sent to all property owners within the exterior boundary of the proposed park, as well as to other interested individuals and groups. The final Management Plan will be sent to the same mailing list.

**Mr. John Simpson**  
**District Manager**  
**Ministry of Natural Resources**  
**Box 3500, Station A**  
**Sudbury, Ontario**  
**P3A 4S2**

Please \_\_\_\_\_ correct my address  
 \_\_\_\_\_ add me to your list  
 \_\_\_\_\_ remove me from your list

\_\_\_\_\_ I own or lease property within the exterior boundary

\_\_\_\_\_ My property is not shown on the

map on the centre pages (please provide details)

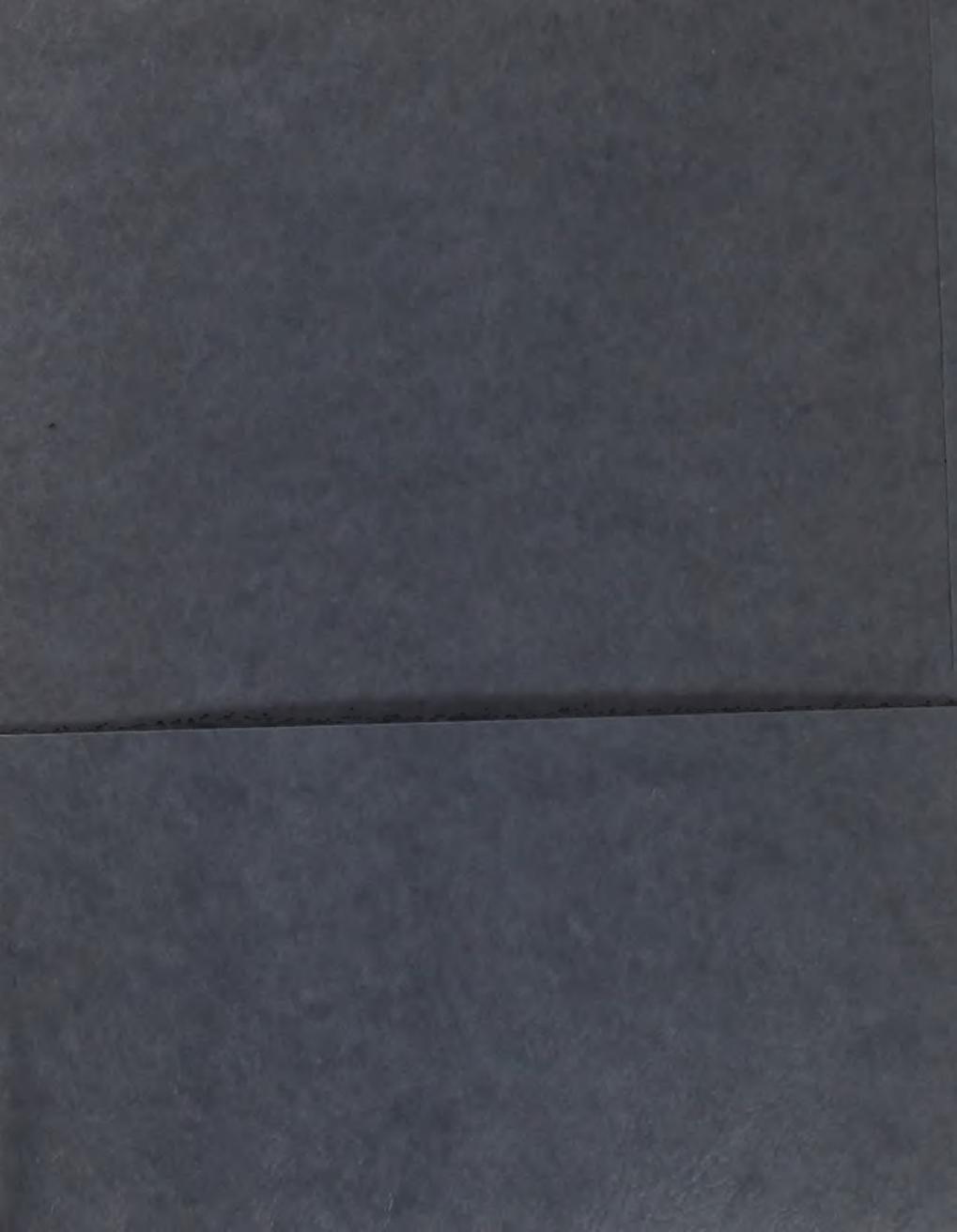
My correct address is:

\_\_\_\_\_ postal code \_\_\_\_\_

The address this paper was sent to is:

\_\_\_\_\_ postal code \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ postal code \_\_\_\_\_



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